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TO: Mayor, Council, City Manager, and City Attorney

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to attend the National League of Cities' "Congress of Cities and Exposition," December 3-7, 2002. The training and networking at this conference were invaluable. I hope that we can utilize some of it here in Troy.

Because Councilwoman Beltramini's report was so thorough, I won't duplicate her information. Instead, I will only report on those sessions that I attended which she did not attend.

Tuesday, December 3rd

Mayor Pryor and I attended the Leadership Training Institute (LTI) session entitled "Guarding the Public Checkbook." This session was presented by Len Wood, a former city manager from California. In addition to the valuable information presented during the classroom session, each attendee received the book "Local Government Dollars and Sense" written by Len Wood. I provided each member of Council and the City Manager one page from this book at our Civic Center Study Session. If you're interested in borrowing the book, let me know.

Based upon the information received at this session, I came away with the belief that Troy's strength in finance and budgeting is our City staff's expertise. On the other hand, I believe that our weakness is in determining the proper role for Council in the budget process.

Wednesday, December 4th

In the morning, I attended the LTI session "Collaborative Leadership: Encouraging Community Problem Solving." The presenter was Dr. Michael Stewart, a former Salt Lake County Commissioner (and a graduate of Wayne State University). While the session was short on substance, it did present a number of ideas on collaborative leadership styles. The best summation of the session would be to repeat Dr. Stewart's characteristics of the collaborative leader: 1) He/she enjoys respect without authority (does not practice retribution); 2) He/she practices servant leadership ("not how many people serve me, but how many people I serve"); 3) He/she is esteemed among peers; and, 4) He/she is solid, not flashy.

In the afternoon, I attended my final LTI session "Ten Habits of Highly Effective Governing Bodies." This session was facilitated by Carl H. Neu, a former councilmember from Lakewood, Colorado. This was an excellent session and I came away with many ideas. Two that are particularly relevant are: 1) We need to rethink the purpose of Council meetings and

get a better handle on how study sessions can be used to guide our policy-making; and, 2) According to Mr. Neu, "Policy making and policy implementation are not distinct and separate functions. Policy making-implementation is a continuum of thought and relations that transforms ideas and abstractions (visions, policies, goals, and plans) into defined, observable ends or outcomes (results, programs, building, streets, deliverable services)."

Neu also mentioned the case of Thornton, Colorado. The city manager and mayor initiated a process with Thornton's council to increase the council's leadership skills and effectiveness that incorporated the "Ten Habits." The process required the council to reexamine the city's mission and the role that it had to assume to ensure fulfillment of that mission. The council made a commitment to leadership innovation and excellence that focuses on long-term and strategic issues. The process requires close attention to community feedback through focus groups and surveys. There is also frequent self-evaluation of both council's and staff's performance and sense of partnership.

Thursday, December 5th

In the afternoon, the Mayor Pryor and I attended the workshop "Creative Financing, Reducing Risk, and Generating Cash Flow for the City from Convention Centers and Hotels." The session provided an overview on Omaha, Nebraska and its efforts to develop a convention center, an arena, and a convention hotel. Matt and I talked with an attorney who played a key role in the financing of the development. I believe that each member of our Council received a CD-ROM with information on the financing arrangement. From what I understand, Michigan tax law precludes the particular methods used in Omaha.

Mayor Pryor and I attended the Republican Mayors and Local Officials reception. One of the hosts was Dearborn Mayor Guido. The former NLC President Karen Anderson was also in attendance. While it was mostly a meet and mingle event, brief remarks were made. After all, you can't gather a bunch of politicians in a room without someone making a speech.

Friday, December 6th

I attended the "Building Quality Communities; Strategies for Civic Engagement" workshop in the morning. The civil patterns of civic engagement are:

1. Encourage ongoing dialog
2. Embrace diversity
3. Generate leadership
4. Promote a sense of community
5. Create a vision for community
6. Promote knowledge of community
7. Connect resources with people

Some cities that have been successful with "civic engagement" are Jacksonville, FL, Portland, OR, and Boulder, CO.

In the afternoon, I attended the Mobile Workshop "It's Easy Being Green – Salt Lake City Green Initiatives." This was a three-hour bus ride around Salt Lake City to see what steps they have taken to protect their environmental resources. For example, they have a staff

person whose sole job it is to promote environmentally friendly policies. One of her first jobs at City Hall was to ask staff to find light bulbs that use less electricity.

Salt Lake City is very active in this arena. In fact, they have a group in their City that promotes open space planning. I entered my business card in a raffle that the group sponsored and won a planning resource library. That library is now in Mark Miller's hands. Hopefully, he will be able to apply some of the open space planning techniques in Troy.

Saturday, December 7th

In the morning, I attended the workshop "Future of Your Sister City: From Culture to Commerce." There were not too many new ideas presented. However, Alicia Ping, Mayor Pro Tem of Saline, MI was one of the panelists. I'm planning on contacting her to get some ideas on how we can move our Sister City relationship forward.

In the afternoon, I attended the NLC Annual Business Meeting and sat in the observer section. I stood by just in case Councilwoman Beltramini was unable to fulfill her obligations. My only disappointment in attending the session occurred when I read the proposed resolutions. Many of the resolutions incorporated the outdated big government philosophy of the 1960s. Not much in the way of "outside the box" thinking.

Conclusion

In the future, I would like to see at least one member of City staff attend these NLC meetings. One key to our success as a City government is to enhance the collaboration between our elected officials and our full-time staff. There is also a lot of information provided that would be beneficial to staff.

I would also like to thank the taxpayers of the City of Troy for providing the revenue that allows their elected officials to attend these types of educational sessions.